



NEWS

**For Immediate Release
April 9, 2003**

**DOE Representatives and Area High School Students To Conduct "Pole Planting"
at New Rifle UMTRA Project Site Wetland**

(Grand Junction, Colorado)—On Saturday, April 12, students from Rifle and DeBeque High Schools will work side-by-side with representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy Grand Junction Office (DOE–GJO) to plant cottonwood and willow cuttings in the wetland area at the Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project site near Rifle.

A 34.2-acre area along the south boundary of the New Rifle UMTRA Project site was set aside to replace a wetland lost during the remediation of uranium mill tailings at the site. "The ground water quality in the wetland area has gradually improved to the point where it can support more wetland vegetation," said Gretchen Van Reyper, Vegetation Specialist for DOE–GJO contractor S.M. Stoller Corporation.

To increase the number of acres of wetland vegetation, woody species will be planted in moist areas around at the site. "Pole plantings," as they are called, entail inserting dormant hardwood cuttings into the soil to ground water level. Approximately 800 cottonwood and 2,000 willow cuttings will be planted.

On Friday afternoon, April 11, members of the River Watchers Club at Rifle High School and some of their parents will help cut the cottonwood and willow shoots on another part of the UMTRA Project site and on property owned by the Colorado Department of Transportation. On Saturday morning, April 12, Rifle and DeBeque students will help plant the cuttings on the west end of the wetland area at the New Rifle site.

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"We wanted to give high school students in the area the opportunity to learn about wetlands and some history of the remedial action at the New Rifle site," said Don Metzler, DOE-GJO Program Manager. Anthony Rossilli, science teacher at Rifle High School, said, "I am excited to have my students involved in this project that will allow them hands-on experience with subjects we are studying in the classroom."

The participants will gather at the Rifle site at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and the planting will begin with a field lecture by Ms. Van Reyper, who will talk about the reconstruction of the wetlands and provide instruction on the planting process. Mr. Metzler will share some history of the UMTRA Project site.

– 30 –

Media are welcome to attend the planting on Saturday, April 12.

Directions to the site are as follows:

From Grand Junction, take I-70 east to Rifle. Take the West Rifle exit and proceed east approximately 1.6 miles on the frontage road. Turn at the entrance to Roaring Fork Resources gravel pit (23704 U.S. Highway 6). Proceed straight on the dirt road approximately 1/4 mile to the fenced area, which is the boundary to site.

From Rifle, take the Highway 6 frontage road west of Rifle to the Roaring Fork Resources gravel pit entrance. See remaining instructions above.

For additional direction information, please contact Wendee Ryan at (970) 248-6765 by Friday, April 11.

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